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STATE FOR EUR/CACEN AND EEB/CBA MERMOUD;
STATE PLEASE PASS TO OPIC AND USTR
ANKARA FOR FCS
DEPT PASS TO TDA FOR STEIN, EXIM FOR GLAZER
COMMERCE FOR 4231 ITA/MAC/ORUE FOR DSTARKS
COMMERCE FOR 3004 ITA/FCS/ ADVOCACY FOR ACHAMS-EDDINE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2018
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [EFIN](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: EEB/CBA SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MERMOUD DISCUSSES
POSSIBLE TRIP BY MES TO U.S. TO PURCHASE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

REF: 07 BAKU 1479

Classified By: DCM Don Lu per reasons 1.4 (B, D).

11. (SBU) In a meeting January 22 with visiting Department of State Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs Frank Mermoud, Minister of Emergency Situations (MES) Heydarov reiterated his interest in sending a working level delegation of experts led by a deputy minister to the U.S. to meet with U.S. emergency officials and purchase emergency equipment and materials (reftel). After Baku's record snow and cold temperatures, Heydarov told Mermoud that MES is also interested in purchasing snow removal equipment and road construction and repair equipment.

12. (SBU) The MES is interested in meeting with U.S. federal authorities, including FEMA and DHS, to discuss U.S. government emergency best practices. In addition, the working level MES delegation is looking to travel to Texas or California to discuss with state authorities emergency management techniques and review emergency equipment. The MES experts would have the authority, according to Heydarov, to purchase a wide variety of emergency equipment during the visit. Heydarov highlighted that MES had yet to sign many purchase and sales contracts with U.S. companies and was eager to pursue commercial opportunities with U.S. companies. Heydarov noted, however, that MES had recently signed a USD 6 million deal for heavy equipment with Caterpillar.

13. (SBU) Heydarov told Mermoud that the MES will send a working-level delegation to the U.S. in March to attend a DOE-sponsored conference. This delegation would be able to extend its visit to the U.S. in order to meet with U.S. emergency officials. Mermoud told MES officials that a trip to the U.S. by working-level officials could be possible in the next few months depending upon the availability of state officials.

14. (SBU) Heydarov briefed on the Government of Azerbaijan's plans to pass a new law on construction code and rules. Mermoud welcomed the new legislation, noting that increased transparency in the construction sector would attract more U.S. companies and create a favorable business climate. Mermoud told Heydarov that MES officials could meet with U.S. construction companies in order to discuss construction best practices and review U.S. construction building and safety standards.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The Embassy supports the proposed visit by MES working-level experts to the U.S. to meet with U.S. emergency agencies and purchase U.S. emergency equipment. (NOTE: Embassy originally requested a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations given the sensitivities of dealing with the MES. Minister Heydarov, upon finding out about Mermoud's plan to visit MES, changed his morning schedule to meet with Mermoud.) The Embassy is sensitive to concerns about the increasing authority of this ministry as well as the corruption concerns related to Minister Heydarov. At the same time, the Embassy believes that failure to have working-level interaction with this ministry will mean that the USG is missing an opportunity to push transparency reforms and opportunities for U.S. businesses.

¶6. (U) EEB/CBA Special Representative Mermoud cleared this cable.
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